

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 AF-10 NEA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00

PM-04 H-01 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 EB-07 /098 W

-----051958Z 021423 /75

R 051730Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7072

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMCONSUL DJIBOUTI

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

AMEMBASSY NAIROI

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY SANA

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, UR, ET

SUBJECT: FIRST REPORT ON MENGISTU VISIT TO MOSCOW

SUMMARY: SOVIET AIRPORT TURNOUT AND PRAVDA REPORTING ON TALKS SUGGESTS EMPHASIS WAS ON ECONOMIC AND MILITARY ASSISTANCE. PODGORNYY SPEECH WAS RATHER CAUTIOUS IN COMPARISON WITH MILITANT SPEECH OF MENGISTU. FORMER CRITICIZED SAUDIA ARABIA WHILE MENGISTU TOOK ON AMERICANS AND SUDANESE. END SUMMARY.

1. MAY 5 PRAVDA CARRIES DESCRIPTION OF MENGISTU ARRIVAL CEREMONIES AND BEGINNING TALKS WITH SOVIETS. LATTER DESCRIBED AS TAKING PLACE IN "FRIENDLY ENVIRONMENT"
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AND IN SPIRIT OF MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING" - A FORMULATION INDICATING MODERATE WARMTH. NO INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE ON SUBSTANCE OF TALKS, BUT PRAVDA SAYS READINESS WAS EXPRESSED TO TAKE NECESSARY STEPS TO DEEPEN RELATIONS IN POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, CULTURAL, "AND OTHER" AREAS. LAST PHRASE IS OFTEN EUPHEMISM FOR MILITARY COOPERATION AND IN THIS CASE IS REINFORCED

BY PRESENCE IN SOVIET

AIRPORT WELCOMING GROUP OF FIRST DEP. MIN. DEF., GENERAL SOKOLOV AND CHIEF, MAIN POLITICAL DIRECTORATE OF ARMY AND NAVY, GENERAL YEPISHEV. HOWEVER, NEITHER IS LISTED AS ATTENDING FIRST DAY'S TALKS.

2. SOVIETS AT AIRPORT AND PARTICIPATING IN TALKS ARE HEAVY ON ECONOMIC SIDE, E.G. MIN. CIVIL AVIATION BUGAYEV, MIN. MARITIME FLEET GUZHENKO, MIN. GEOLOGY KOZLOVSKIY, MIN. TRACTOR AND AG. MACHINE BUILDING SINITSYN, AND CHAIRMAN STATE COMM. FOR FOREIGN ECONOMIC RELATIONS (GKES) SKACHKOV. FIRST DAY'S TALKS SEEM TO HAVE BEEN DIVIDED AMONG TWO SEPARATE GROUPS, FIRST GROUP HAD PODGORNYY, FIRST DEP. CHAIRMAN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS TIKHONOV, GKES CHAIRMAN SKACHKOV, AND GROMYKO ON SOVIET SIDE AND MENGISTU AND PMAC MEMBERS BERKHANU BAYE, ADDIS TEDLA, LEGESSE ASFAU, AND MENGISTU GEMECHU ON ETHIOPIAN SIDE. SECOND GROUP HAD ON SOVIET SIDE, DEP. FON. MIN. MALIK, ASSISTANTS TO PODGORNYY V. V. KORTUNOV AND V.S. KITAYEV PLUS LOWER RANKING MFA PERSONNEL. ON ETHIOPIAN SIDE WERE SENIOR MINISTER IN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS KHAYLYU YYEMENY, CHAIRMAN OF PLANNING COMMISSION TAYYE VORKU, FON. MIN. FELLEKE GEDLEGIORGIS, AMB. BELACHEV ASRAT AND POLITICAL COUNSELOR IN COUNCIL OF MINISTERS GETACHEU KIBRET (ALL ETHIOPIAN NAMES PHONETIC).

3. DINNER SPEECHES CARRIED IN FULL IN MAY 5 PRAVDA.
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PODGORNYY'S WAS CAUTIOUS AND LESS MILITANT IN COMPARISON WITH MENGISTU'S.

4. PODGORNYY'S MAIN POINTS WERE:

-- THAT SOVIET UNION IS FOR DEFENSE OF "INDEPENDENT DEVELOPMENT" OF ETHIOPIA AND THAT ETHIOPIANS ARE CLEANING THEIR HOUSE OF THEIR OWN OPPRESSORS;
-- "SYMPATHY" OF ETHIOPIAN WORKERS WAS ON SIDE OF SOCIALISM AND THEIR GOAL WAS TO FOLLOW PATCH OF SOCIALIST ORIENTATION (THUS AVOIDING CLEAR, POLITICAL DEFINITION OF ETHIOPIAN REGIME);

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-- GAINING POWER WAS ONLY BEGINNING OF GREAT
AND COMPLICATE PATH, THAT SOVIETS "RELATED WITH
UNDERSTANDING" TO PMAC INTENTION TO SOLVE PROBLEM OF ERITREA
"ON A DEMOCRATIC BASIS", AND THAT SOVIETS "HOPE" ETHIO-
PIANS SUCCESSFULLY SOLVE TASK OF MAINTAINING UNITY OF
ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE AROUND REVOLUTIONARY LEADERSHIP;
-- THAT ENEMIES OF NEW ETHIOPIA WERE ATTEMPTING TO
USE ERITREAN SEPARATISM FOR THEIR PURPOSES AND THAT
CERTAIN IMPERIALIST AND REACTIONARY FORCES ARE GIVING
SUPPORT TO "INTERNAL COUNTER-REVOLUTION" IN ETHIOPIA;
-- POLICIES OF "DIVIDE AND CONQUER" PLAY WITH
FIRE AND COULD LEAD TO DANGEROUS CONFLICTS;
-- IMPERIALISTS ARE USING SOME ARAB
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COUNTRIES, "ABOVE ALL SAUDIA ARABIA," TO ESTABLISH
CONTROL IN RED SEA REGION AND TO CREATE "SOME SORT OF
EXCLUSIVE MILITARY-POLITICAL BLOC" THERE;
-- GOAL OF THESE EFFORTS WAS TO SEPARATE AND
WEAKEN PROGRESSIVE COUNTRIES SO AS TO DEAL WITH THEM

ONE BY ONE.

5. MENGISTU'S SPEECH IN CONTRAST WAS LONGER, LESS SPECIFIC AND FILLED WITH MARXIST-LENINIST JARGON. HE DWELLED AT LENGTH ON ETHIOPIAN DEVELOPMENTS SINCE 1974 WITHOUT, HOWEVER, SPECIFICALLY MENTIONING THE FEBRUARY PURGE. DESCRIBING INTERNAL DIFFICULTIES, MENGISTU SAID ETHIOPIANS WHO HAD UNITED TO OVERTHROW EMPEROR WERE NO REPRESENTED BY GROUPS WHICH REFLECTED THEIR SEPARATE CLASS INTERESTS, E.G. MONARCHIST ETHIOPIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION, ETHIOPIAN NATIONAL-REVOLUTIONARY PARTY AND THE "SELF NAMED" FRONTS OF LIBERATION OF ERITREA (WHICH RECEIVE MONEY FROM REACTIONARY ARAB RULING CLASSES). GUARDIAN, COORDINATOR AND LEADER OF THESE FORCES, HE SAID, WAS SWORN ENEMY OF OPPRESSED PEOPLES - IMPERIALISM, "ESPECIALLY AMERICAN IMPERIALISM". HE WENT ON TO ATTACK IMPERIALISM AND REACTIONARY ARAB RULING CLASSES, IN PARTICULAR RULING CLASS OF SUDAN WHICH HAD UNITED REACTIONARY ELEMENTS IN ERITREA IN ORDER TO SEPARATE ERITREA AND ESTABLISH STRATEGIC CONTROL OVER THE RED SEA. IN THIS STRUGGLE, HE SAID, GREAT SOVIET PEOPLE ARE WITH US AND, THEREFORE, WE WILL WIN. LIKE PODGORNYY, HE DEFENDED ETHIOPIA'S INTERESTS IN RED SEA REGION AND IN FREE TRANSIT. HOWEVER, WHERE PODGORNYY HAD NOT MENTIONED DJIBOUTI AT ALL, MENGISTU DESCRIBED ETHIOPIA'S HOPES FOR INDEPENDENCE FOR TERRITORY OF AFARS AND ISSAS (FTAI) AND DESCRIBED THE TIES BETWEEN THE ETHIOPIAN PEOPLE AND THE PEOPLE OF FTAI OF HISOTRY, CULTURE, BLOOD, AND ECONOMY.

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6. COMMENT: FROM THE SOVIET LINE UP AT THE AIRPORT AND IN THE TALKS IT SEEMS CLEAR THAT THEY INTEND TO DO MORE FOR THE PMAC IN THE ECONOMIC AND MILITARY FIELDS. WHAT IS STILL UNCLEAR, HOWEVER, IS HOW MUCH THEY INTEND TO DO AND HOW THEY HOPE TO LIMIT THE NEGATIVE SOMALI REACTION.

7. POLITICAL COUNSELOR ATTENDED "CHIEFS OF MISSION" RECEPTION FOR MENGISTU ON MAY 5. SOMALI AMBASSADOR WAS THERE, BUT SYRIAN MINISTER-COUNSELOR (JUST RETURNED SYRIAN AMBASSADOR TOLD HIM TO PRETEND HE WAS STILL CHARGE) SAID THAT IRAQIS, EGYPTIANS, SUDANESE - AND PERHAPS LEBANESE - WERE NOT PRESENT, A DEMONSTRATION OF ARAB NON-SUPPORT FOR MENGISTU.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
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